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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000104

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OPEN FOR BUSINESS, BUT NOT MUCH  
ON THE DOCKET

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (C) Aboubacar Sompore, President of the National Assembly, officially opened the spring legislative session on April 7. Despite speaking for 30 minutes, Sompore did not say much substantively, instead focusing on broad-based themes without going into much depth. He made no reference to upcoming legislative elections. In a meeting with Poloff, the legislative majority leader, Banire, claimed ignorance as to what would be on the congressional docket, although he said that the deputies would be looking at a "Child Code" and a bill improving protections for handicapped people, but that any questions of constitutional reform should be handled by referendum. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) The opening ceremony was initially planned to begin at 10:00, but upon arrival, diplomatic guests were informed that it had been rescheduled for 16:00. The National Assembly's "session of laws" lasts for 45 days, or about six weeks.

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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING  
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¶3. (U) Speaking from 17 pages of prepared text, Sompore touched on a number of broad themes, including democracy, human rights, national unity, the need for change and reform, security, economic development, and globalization. He did mention that he was opening the final session of laws for the current National Assembly, but said nothing about the country's upcoming legislative elections. He spoke at some length about the need for national dialogue and the framework that has been set up to facilitate that dialogue, namely the Committee de Suivi. Sompore referred to Guinea's underlying political and economic troubles in vague terms, stressing that dialogue is the only mechanism for addressing these problems. Later, Sompore specifically mentioned inflationary prices and rising fuel costs as factors that exacerbate the country's chronic economic problems.

¶4. (U) As he ended his speech and officially opened the session of laws, Sompore told the assembled deputies that the session gives them the opportunity to have a "big debate." He did not mention any specific objectives or bills to be considered.

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ON THE DOCKET  
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¶5. (SBU) Poloff met with Aliou Banire Diallo, President of

the ruling Party for Unity and Progress (PUP) within the National Assembly, and a member of the PUP's executive board, on April 8. When asked about the planned docket for the legislative session, Banire said that the National Assembly was in the process of electing its internal executive bureau, an annual process that must take place at the beginning of the spring session of laws. He told Poloff that once the executive bureau had been elected, they would decide on the official docket.

16. (SBU) Poloff pressed Banire for more information, pointing out that as the majority leader, he must surely have an idea of what will be discussed. Banire laughed and said that he was sure they would be discussing the new "Child Code," which was submitted by the Ministry of Social Affairs. In addition, he said they had received something dealing with the rights of handicapped people.

17. (C) When asked whether the National Assembly would be considering any changes to the constitution or laws affecting the structure of power within the government. Banire said that the Committee de Suivi has not yet come out with its official recommendation so it is unclear whether they will be proposing statutory changes. Poloff joked with Banire, saying he has likely heard something about what the Committee is talking about and what the likely conclusions will be. Banire said he has not been privy to the discussions, but when asked what the National Assembly would do if presented with a recommendation to change the law, Banire said that he will recommend that such a decision be handled by referendum. "I will not encourage the National Assembly to address such a question," he said.

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COMMENTS

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18. (C) Given the fact that deputies have now been in office almost one year longer than their elected term and there is some question as to the legitimacy of the institution, it is unlikely that much will come out of this session. In his lengthy opening remarks, Sompere did not say much of import. The proposed "Child Code" has been in the drafting stage for a number of years and is supposed to address a wide range of children's issues including child labor. Based on the majority leader's comments, there did not seem to be much on the agenda for the National Assembly to consider. According to Banire, the National Assembly is unlikely to address the key question of constitutional reform. END COMMENT.

CARTER